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AFRICOM: Can America's Newest Combatant Command Stabilize Africa Using a Strategy of "Sunshine and Love?"

by

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ABSTRACT

United States Africa Command AFRICOM promises to be a different kind of command that will take a non-traditional approach to solving African problems and achieving U.S. objectives on the continent. This unique mission includes a multi-agency and multi-organization approach. AFRICOM has incorporated within its ranks representatives from other US government agencies as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). And, as it sets out to achieve its goals of security and stability, AFRICOM will attempt to use non-kinetic means. It will focus on security, stability, and conflict-prevention. To achieve these objectives AFRICOM plans to utilize security cooperation, crisis response, humanitarian assistance and civil-military affairs projects as its weapons of choice. In essence this "sunshine and love" policy is an extension of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) model, but is it an effective strategy for AFRICOM to us throughout the continent?

CJTF-HOA was established to combat terrorism though promoting regional cooperation, good governance, stability, and development. This non-traditional military mission was intended to counter extremism and militant Islamism by preventing safe havens for terrorists and promoting US goodwill through civil military affairs projects. In order to assess the CJTF-HOA model as a strategy for AFRICOM, this paper looked at common critiques of military intervention in humanitarian affairs and information operations in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti as well as key issues in the Horn of Africa such as good governance in Ethiopia, problems in Somalia, and piracy. After reviewing these areas, it is clear that the CJTF-HOA model can be effective under certain circumstances. But, because the CJTF-HOA model requires that which AFRICOM aims to achieve, namely security and stability, it is unsuitable for AFRICOM to use as a model throughout the continent.

OVERVIEW

US security, economic and energy interests in Africa are on the rise. The continent currently provides 16% of US oil supplies, and this percentage is expected to grow significantly over the next decade. But, with insurgents in Nigeria, terrorists and pirates operating in the Horn of Africa, political instability in Central Africa, terrorist recruiting in the north, and a seemingly unstoppable HIV/AIDS epidemic, African instability is undermining U.S. strategic interests. The Chinese have also identified their own growing strategic interests in Africa and have begun to establish partnerships with local governments in an attempt to gain favor and access to vast energy resources. In response to these concerns the United States established Africa Command (AFRICOM), which intends to address these problems in a non-traditional way. This is evident in the new command's focus areas which include "bringing peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa."[1]

AFRICOM aims to use this non-traditional approach to achieve its objective of a secure and stable Africa and the U.S. National Security Strategy objectives of "liberty, peace, stability and increasing prosperity…strengthen[ing] fragile and failing states and bring[ing] ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies"[2] But AFRICOM will not be the first U.S. military mission in Africa to attempt to use non-traditional means to achieve U.S. national security objectives. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) has operated in East Africa since 2002. The command has utilized military-to-military training, humanitarian assistance and economic development initiatives to "counter extremism…build security capacity, promote regional cooperation, and protect coalition interests to prevail against extremism."[3] The author refers to CJTF-HOA's strategy as "sunshine and love" as it is non-kinetic and attempts to

achieve its objectives, including counterterrorism, by building wells, schools, medical clinics, and inoculating animals, missions most Americans would likely associate with the Peace Corps. But AFRICOM's leaders and some scholars have suggested the command should use the CJTF-HOA model as an overall strategy to achieve its objectives throughout Africa.

In assessing the viability of using this peaceful, non-kinetic, "sunshine and love" approach to tackle AFRICOM's tough missions, CJTF-HOA could serve as a good measuring stick. An *Army Times* article reported that AFRICOM looked to expand the CJTF-HOA mission throughout Africa.[4] Another article in *Joint Forces Quarterly* stated "it would seem that the CJTF-HOA model has helped shape the agenda of USAFRICOM."[5] And Rear Admiral Bob Moeller, the head of the AFRICOM transition team stated "CJTF-HOA…is the clear model for what comes next…it is the franchise that will be replicated across the continent."[6] CJTF-HOA has used military-to-military training, wells, schools, medical clinics and animal inoculations as its weapons of choice in combating poor governance, terrorism, poverty, and failed and weak states in order to achieve U.S. National Security objectives in the Horn of Africa. Is this the right model for AFRICOM to use throughout the continent? Can AFRICOM use this policy successfully throughout the continent? Can America's newest combatant command achieve its objectives by using this "sunshine and love" strategy? While this strategy is unique and is capable of tackling many of the problems AFRICOM seeks to solve, the CJTF-HOA model is not an effective model for AFRICOM to use for two main reasons. First, the model is unable to address the issues of failed or failing states and authoritarian governments. And, second, it requires security and stability before it can be implemented, which makes it unable to address many of the most significant problems facing Africa. But to fully understand why the CJTF-

HOA model falls short, Africa's strategic importance and AFRICOM's mission must first be understood.

AFRICA'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

The U.S. military has a lengthy history of engagement in Africa, but this engagement has been sporadic at best. Africa was not even part of the Department of Defense's Unified Command structure until 1952, when North African nations were added to EUCOM because of their traditional ties to the European continent.[7] In 1960, as many nations struggled with independence, the rest of the continent was added to the Atlantic Command because of the threat of Soviet intervention.[8] As the Unified Command plan was revised through the 70s, 80s and 90s, Africa was included and omitted numerous times. As recently as 2007 Africa was divided among three different Unified Commands. But all of this changed on 6 February 2007 as President Bush announced the creation of AFRICOM to address Africa's growing strategic importance. The command reached full operational capability on 1 October 2008.[9]

In his 2006 National Security Strategy, President George W. Bush stated "Africa holds growing strategic importance and is a high priority for this administration."[10] But the tide for U.S. interests in Africa actually started to turn in 1998 when the Clinton Administration bombed a chemical production facility suspected of making chemical agents for Al Qaida. This event, which was in response to terrorist attacks against the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, forced the U.S. to relook at its policies on Africa.[11] AFRICOM's inception reflects this renewed view and reassessment of U.S. strategic interests in the continent.[12] These interests, some of which are outlined in the 2006 U.S. National Security Strategy, include combating HIV/AIDS, ensuring access to energy resources, preventing armed conflict, countering Chinese influence and combating terrorism.[13]

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell described the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa as "the greatest threat of mankind today."[14] In Africa it is estimated that 22 million are infected with HIV/AIDS and that 40% to 60% of the security forces in some African nations are infected with the disease.[15] This makes it difficult to deploy and employ these forces throughout the continent. Realizing the potential humanitarian disaster and potential security concerns, President Bush made combating HIV/AIDS in Africa one of his administration's top priorities. When discussing the AIDS pandemic in Africa, President Bush stated "we are too wealthy a nation, and too compassionate a nation, not to take this step…it's a chance to save millions of lives."[16] In 2008 one of President Bush's primary AIDS initiatives, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), received $48 million over five years.[17] Of the 20 nations that receive funding from PEPFAR, 16 are in Africa.[18]

Africa is also key to another U.S. strategic interest; reducing reliance on Middle East oil. The continent has the potential to help the U.S. diversify its supply of oil and other natural resources. Currently, the U.S. imports approximately 15% of its oil from the continent, but some estimates put imports at 25% by 2015.[19] The oil is mainly exported from the West Coast of Africa, and Nigeria in particular, which is the largest African supplier of oil to the U.S. and fifth of all global suppliers to the U.S. Equatorial Guinea and Angola are also becoming significant global suppliers.[20] Importing these energy resources reduces the U.S.'s reliance on Middle East and Venezuelan oil suppliers, whose governments are not always in step with American agendas. African oil is also strategically located in close proximity to the United States. Although Venezuela is closer, African oil is of a much higher quality and is more easily refined. With current levels of output and the future potential of Gulf of Guinea oil exports, the U.S. has significant interests in seeing this area of Africa secure and stable.

Another U.S. strategic interest is reacting to China's growing influence in Africa. China appears to be asserting its influence over Africa in an attempt to secure access to energy resources, making Africa the new front-line in the U.S.-China competition for natural resources and influence. Over the past five years, China has tripled its trade with the continent to $37 billion.[21] It has also negotiated trade deals with many African nations and is educating political and military leaders at Chinese universities and military schools.[22] Hu Jintoa, the Chinese President, has made Africa a focus of his diplomatic efforts, visiting numerous countries on the continent. One Pentagon official assessed that, while the U.S. is bogged down in Afghanistan and Iraq, "China is taking advantage by making inroads elsewhere and particularly Africa."[23]

In addition to countering Chinese influence, preventing armed conflict in Africa is also in the national interest of the U.S. Armed conflict ravaged many African nations as they sought independence from colonial powers, but since the mid 1990s, the continent has seen a significant decline in violence.[24] Nevertheless, armed conflict remains a major destabilizing factor on the continent. Insurgencies and political conflict have caused human suffering and undermined development and humanitarian assistance efforts across the continent. Today, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Uganda and Nigeria host just a few of the conflicts currently ongoing in Africa.[25] While armed conflict in Africa has served as a major destabilizing factor, it also has the potential to increase the terrorist threat on the continent. As President Bush pointed out in his 2006 National Security Strategy, regional conflicts have the potential to lead to "failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists."[26] Although African nations have taken a leading role in conducting peacekeeping missions on the continent, these forces lack training, equipment and logistical support.[27] These peacekeeping missions also drain limited African security force resources and require massive

donations from the international community. While political conflict and instability offer potential safe havens for terrorists, they also create human suffering and poverty.[28] And, without human security, "sustainable, poverty-reducing development is nearly impossible to achieve."[29]

Although access to combating HIV/AIDS, ensuring access to energy resources, countering Chinese influence and preventing armed conflict are all U.S. national interests, nothing has been more in the forefront of U.S. policies in recent years than preventing the spread of violent extremism. Combating terrorists is vital to stabilizing the African continent, and terrorist activity has been on the rise in Africa over that later part of the 20th Century. The terrorism threat in Africa became starkly apparent in a recent report in the magazine *Sada al-Jihad* (Echo of Jihad). In the magazine, the author of this article reflects on the importance of Africa to al Qaida:

> There is no doubt that al-Qaida and the holy warriors appreciate the significance of the African regions for the military campaigns against the Crusaders. Many people sense that this continent has not yet found its proper and expected role and the next stages of the conflict will see Africa as the battlefield…In general, this continent has an immense significance. Whoever looks at Africa can see that is does not enjoy the interest, efforts and activity it deserves in the war against the Crusaders. This is a continent with many potential advantages and exploiting this potential will greatly advance the jihad. It will promote achieving the expected targets of jihad. Africa is a fertile soil for the advance of jihad and the jihadi cause.[30]

Counter-terrorism drove much of the foreign policy agenda under President Bush, and the primary threat from Africa was portrayed as the danger of ungoverned spaces and lawless areas harboring and supporting terrorists.[31] The Horn of Africa posed a significant threat due to weak and failing governments, like Somalia, which had witnessed significant al Qaida and other violent extremist activity since the early 1990s. In 1993 the U.S. intervened in Somalia in an attempt to combat famine. During this mission 18 U.S. soldiers were killed and two U.S.

helicopters were downed in an attack that some analysts have attributed to Islamic terrorists.[32] In

1998 al Qaida terrorists bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, demonstrating the

terrorist group's ability and intent to conduct operations in Africa. The attacks killed over 200

people and wounded nearly 4000.[33] Additionally, in 2002 terrorists attempted to shoot down an

Israeli airliner in Kenya. At the same time as the airliner attack, al Qaida operatives attacked a

hotel near Mombasa, Kenya, killing 15 people.[34] This recent history of attacks, when coupled

with failing governments in Sudan and Somalia, made the Horn of Africa a key front line in the

Bush administration's War on Terrorism.

Sudan has also been labeled a hotspot for terrorist activity and key to winning the War on

Terrorism in Africa. The country's sponsorship of violent extremists poses a significant terrorist

threat in the Horn of Africa. Sudan is currently the only sub-Saharan African nation listed as a

state sponsor of terrorism by the U.S. State Department and is notorious for having harbored

Osama bin Laden in the early 1990s. [35] The country also provided safe haven for other terrorist

groups including Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Hamas, and Abu Nidal.[36] Although the

current Sudanese government is attempting to part ways with its history of harboring terrorists, it

is having a difficult time. The government in Khartoum has attempted to diminish its support of

Islamic radicalism in an attempt to improve relations with its neighbors and the United States,

but many high ranking Sudanese officials in the government are having a hard time changing its

radical ways.[37]

Somalia remains the most unstable nation and potential safe haven for terrorist

organizations. The Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006 unseated the Council of Islamic

Courts (CIC) government and installed the U.N. and U.S. backed Transitional Federal

Government, but the country remains lawless outside of Mogadishu and the government is

combating a CIC insurgency. With this ongoing power struggle, Somalia has essentially been without an effective government since the early 1990s. As a result of this lawlessness and strategic location, foreign terrorists have sought safe haven in the country. Al Shabaab is a Somali terrorist organization that is affiliated with Al Qaeda. Some reports assess members of the group have fought alongside Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.[38] In May of 2008, the U.S. targeted and killed Aden Hashi Ayro, a Shabaab commander.[39]

Since September 2001, the U.S.-led War on Terrorism has been waged on almost every continent, including Africa. Terrorism and insurgencies affect every corner of Africa and contribute significantly to instability in the Horn. Although this War has focused on al Qaida and its associates on the continent, numerous other terrorist threats exist and are of graver concern for African nations. In response to the significant threat terrorism posed to African security and stability, and to respond to Africa's growing strategic significance to the U.S., the Department of Defense began discussions to establish a command focused solely on the Africa continent. Discussions began in the late 1990s, but gained significant traction after the attacks of 11 September 2001. While the creation of the command has raised both praise and ire in Africa, its organization and plans to apply the military's "soft-power" to achieve its objectives has stirred debate in the U.S

UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

In the 2002 National Security Strategy, President Bush put a new focus on Africa by stating "in Africa, promise and opportunity sit side-by-side with disease, war, and desperate poverty…this threatens both a core value of the United States – preserving human dignity – and our strategic priority – combating global terror."[40] The shift in Africa policy was even more

evident in the 2006 National Security Strategy which stated Africa was a "high priority."[41] As

the strategic importance of Africa increased, the U.S. responded by establishing AFRICOM.

First and foremost, AFRICOM serves as a "one-stop-shop" for U.S. military strategy and

engagement on the continent. This is a significant improvement in unity of command over the

previous construct, which placed parts of Africa under Central Command, European Command,

and Pacific Command. But, more interestingly, AFRICOM promises to be a "different type of

Command" and a "Combatant command Plus."[42] "Africa Command will enhance our efforts to

bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development,

health, education, democracy and economic growth in Africa,"[43] stated President Bush. These

are unique missions for a Combatant command, but this is what is supposed to set AFRICOM

apart. AFRICOM plans to focus on interagency coordination and utilize "soft power" to achieve

its objectives.[44] As the first commander of AFRICOM, General William E. Ward, described the

command:

> AFRICOM is pioneering a new way for a Unified Command to fulfill its
> role in supporting the security interests of our nation. From inception, AFRICOM
> was intended to be a different kind of command designed to address the security
> challenges confronting the U.S. in the 21st Century. We are integrating
> interagency personnel into our structure to improve both the planning and
> execution of our duties. By incorporating interagency representatives into our
> structure, we will provide better informed and more effective support to initiatives
> led by civilian Departments and Agencies, such as the Department of State, and
> the U.S. Agency for International Development.[45]

Instead of focusing on fighting and winning the nations' kinetic wars, AFRICOM is

tasked with fighting the non-kinetic type, mainly conflict prevention, security cooperation,

capacity building, and promoting good governance. Looking at AFRICOM's stated major focus

areas, it is easy to see that this is not a traditional Combatant command. The Commander's focus areas are:

1. Employ active security to prevent and mitigate the effects of conflict
2. Assist African partners in developing national and regional security institution capabilities that promote security and stability and facilitate development
3. Strengthen existing relationships and expand our network of partners on the continent
4. Support U.S. government departments and agencies in implementing security, diplomatic, and development policies
5. Defeat al Qaida and its associated movements[46]

Only number five stands out as a traditional military mission. To accomplish the non-traditional military objectives, AFRICOM is employing an interagency approach. A U.S. State Department official will serve as Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities and another State Department official will also fill the AFRICOM Foreign Policy Advisor position.[47] This is in sharp contrast to other Combatant commands which typically have one State Department liaison officer. Additionally, the U.S. Agency for International Development, Treasury Department, Coast Guard and Homeland Security will have significant representation in the new command.[48] But while the creation and innovative structure of the command have won high praise in many military and academic circles within the U.S., it initially received a chilly reception within its area of responsibility.

Unfortunately, AFRICOM lost its first battle in Africa before it was even officially established. Upon hearing the U.S. was creating a military command for Africa, many in the African press revolted with headlines such as:

"Doubts Over AFRICOM,"[49] "U.S. Africa Command: Next Step or Next Stumble?"[50] "Analysis: AFRICOM Mission Prompts Concerns,"[51] "The United States Africa Command Initiative Is Not Welcome In Africa,"[52] "To Qualify for More Aid, Poor African States Must Swarm With Terrorists."[53]

This initial negative response also boiled over into negotiations about where to base AFRICOM. Most nations were reluctant to host the command because of suspicions over its intentions and fear that its presence could draw terrorist attacks. Instead of being based in Africa, AFRICOM will maintain its headquarters in Germany until at least 2012, when the DOD will readdress the issue. This delay was intended to "allow the command to gain greater understanding of its long-term operational requirements."[54]

AFRICOM had a significant challenge in selling itself to African nations. The idea of hosting a combatant command headquarters was viewed by many as a form of neo-colonialism. The President of Zambia, Levy Mwanawasa, and South African Defense Minister, Mosiuoa Lekota, claimed the 13 nations that make up the South African Development Community did not welcome the AFRICOM headquarters in Africa. Minister Lekota also stated "Africa has to avoid the presence of foreign forces on its soil."[55] Additionally, U.S. intervention in Somalia in the early 1990s and inaction during the Rwanda genocide have made many Africans skeptical of the U.S.'s commitment.[56] As Representative John Tierney pointed out after a U.S. House of Representatives hearing on AFRICOM:

> The people of Africa need education, health care and good governance – diplomatic tasks not military tasks. The Pentagon says it will help the African people, but who's going to buy that? It looks like AFRICOM is going over there to protect oil and fight terrorists, the same misguided way we fought terrorists in other places.[57]

As if trying to convince a skeptical African population of the command's intentions isn't difficult enough, AFRICOM plans to promote stability through building the capacity of African governments, an almost overwhelming challenge on such a large and diverse continent. The first issue is size. With 12 million square miles and a poor network of roads, Africa is not easy to travel around. Given the limited U.S. military presence on the continent, being able to

implement a coherent strategy over such a large area with poor transportation infrastructure will be difficult at best. Then there are the issues the military and its partner agencies need to address over this massive space; extreme poverty (43% of the population lives on less than $1 a day[58]), combating the spread of HIV/AIDS (between 21 and 27 million people are infected), resolving conflicts (which continue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and elsewhere), and promoting good governance.

As AFRICOM sets out to engage these overwhelming problems through promoting stability and capacity building, it must also focus on combating terrorists. As General Ward points out, AFRICOM's contribution to the Global War on Terror will come via its number one priority:

> AFRICOM's number one theater-wide goal is to promote security and stability within its AOR. By strengthening our partners through capacity building efforts, we will deny terrorists freedom of action and access to resources, while diminishing the conditions that foster violent extremism.[59]

AFRICOM's focus areas also include "defeating al Qaida and its associated movements."[60] But, can AFRICOM do this with its non-kinetic, "sunshine and love" policy? In assessing the viability of using this approach to tackle these tough missions, CJTF-HOA could serve as a good measuring stick. CJTF-HOA has used military-to-military training, wells, schools, medical clinics and animal inoculations as its primary means of combating poor governance, terrorism, poverty, and failed and weak states in order to achieve U.S. National Security objectives in the Horn of Africa.

COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE – HORN OF AFRICA

The largest, most visible contingent of U.S. forces in Africa is CJTF-HOA, which is based at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. CJTF-HOA was stood-up at Camp Lejeune, North

Carolina in October 2002.[61] As Operation ENDURING FREEDOM was ongoing in

Afghanistan, CENTCOM was worried that Al Qaida terrorists would flee central Asia in search

of a new location to set up their operations. CJTF-HOA was designed to stop the flow of

extremists to the Horn of Africa. But the rush of Al Qaida militants to the Horn did not happen

as expected.[62] Instead of disbanding the force, CENTCOM gave CJTF-HOA a non-traditional

counterterrorism mission in the area. The task force moved from the *USS Mount Whitney* to

Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, in May 2003. Its mission adapted from a capture and kill focus to a

mission of security cooperation and training, humanitarian assistance and development. Instead

of kinetic means, CJTF-HOA focused on the military's soft-power to alleviate the underlying

conditions that cause terrorism.[63]

CJTF-HOA's mission area in the Horn of Africa includes the nations of Djibouti, Eritrea,

Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.[64] In contrast to the kinetic

operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, General Ghormley, the CJTF-HOA Commander in 2006,

stated the task force "wages peace as aggressively as possible."[65] It uses soft-power tactics to

achieve its mission to "build regional security capacity, forge relationships and support

development" in an effort to "counter extremism."[66] The primary tactics used by CJTF-HOA are

military-to-military security training with regional partners and civil military operations.[67] The

Task Force is proud, even boastful, of the tools it is using to combat terrorism in the Horn of

Africa. Its front line troops are doctors, civil engineers and educators; its weapons of choice

include building materials, well-drillers and medical supplies.[68] From 2002 to 2006, the Task

Force built 52 schools, 6 hospitals and 21 medical clinics.[69] To date it has also drilled or

refurbished over 113 wells, assisted with 11 humanitarian assistance missions and trained most

partner nations on security and counterterrorism tactics.[70]

CJTF-HOA is also taking an interagency approach to achieve its objectives in the Horn, combining its "counter extremism" efforts with the State Department and USAID. While CJTF-HOA builds clinics and schools, USAID "is providing educational and medical training and resources, developing instructional materials and building institutional capacity."[71] The approach appears to be mutually beneficial, as Michael Hess of USAID noted in testimony before the U.S. Senate:

> DOD can support national security objectives in ways that USAID cannot. DOD can help professionalize African militaries; strengthen the African regional security architecture, including African Standby Force; mitigate HIV/AIDS and other public health threats in the security sector; and provide disaster response capacity if others cannot. USAID participation in such efforts seeks to maximize effectiveness in ways that broadly support development and humanitarian objectives.[72]

CJTF-HOA routinely teams with the U.S. State Department, USAID and some non-governmental organizations in its area of responsibility.

CJTF-HOA has become something of a new model for the Global War on Terrorism. Its focus on security, diplomacy and development are in stark contrast to counterterrorism missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and even the Philippines. Its close coordination with the State Department, USAID and local governments is also seen a fresh and more effective way to achieve U.S. strategic objectives, especially in Africa. Given the tools used, mission objectives and interagency approach, the underlying strategy of CJTF-HOA is to promoting good governance and rebuild the functional effectiveness of states through capacity building. Using humanitarian assistance, civil military affairs projects, and military-to-military training programs, CJTF-HOA aims to help Africans help themselves.[73] It also aims to extend the reach of the host nation's government and help the host nation populace accept and feel comfortable with their government. In essence, to use an old cliché, "it's the government, stupid." Or, as John

Pendergrast, a Senior Advisor with the International Crisis Group, pointed out "conflict

resolution and good governance are, in fact, the keys to countering terrorism in the Greater Horn

of Africa over the long term."[74] If individuals are comfortable with the government they have,

then they are less likely to become or harbor violent extremists. Before assessing how well the

CJTF-HOA model will work for AFRICOM, it is necessary to evaluate how well it has worked

in the Horn of Africa.

EVALUATING THE CJTF-HOA MODEL

In the very first sentence of the *2006 National Security Strategy,* President Bush stated "It

is the policy of the United States to seek and support democratic movements and institutions in

every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[75] The strategy

goes on to describe U.S. goals in Africa, "to promote…the expansion of effective, democratic

governance so that African states can take the lead in addressing African challenges."[76] As laid

out above, CJTF-HOA's strategy to achieving these national security objectives is to promote

security and stability through good governance, reducing the allure of violent extremism and

helping Africans help themselves. Evaluating CJTF-HOA's effectiveness in achieving these

goals is difficult at best. Therefore, for the purposes of this research paper, all of the positive and

negative trends in the Horn of Africa related to CJTF-HOA's mission will be attributed to the

task force itself. The aggregate of these trends should provide a clear picture of how well the

task force has addressed U.S. national security objectives as well as its own stated mission. In

order to evaluate the effectiveness of the CJTF-HOA model, this research paper looked at

common critiques of military intervention in humanitarian operations, information operations in

Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti, good governance in Ethiopia, problems in Somalia, and piracy.

CJTF-HOA has conducted hundreds of humanitarian assistance missions in the Horn of Africa. These missions included building schools, wells, and medical clinics as well as inoculating livestock. By improving education, providing clean drinking water and medical care facilities for the local populations CJTF-HOA aims to extend the reach of host nation governments, provide the population a sense that their government is capable of delivering basic services, and, in turn, prevent the poor or disenfranchised from becoming or harboring terrorists. The projects CJTF-HOA conducts also aim to create good relations between the U.S. military and local civilians. As of June 2006, CJTF-HOA personnel conducting missions throughout its area of responsibility had never been attacked, a statistic the command attributes to the acceptance and positive image of the task force.[77]

Non-governmental organizations have mixed feelings about military intervention in these types of humanitarian assistance operations. Many welcome military assistance and consider them valuable partners, while others refuse to cooperate.[78] One of the most common arguments against military intervention is that the military lacks the training and expertise to conduct these types of operations effectively.[79] As a result, "they may therefore deliver aid to people who do not need it, or may deliver inappropriate supplies without knowing it."[80] Without proper training, the military may miscalculate the real needs of the population. Unfortunately, the author was not able to find enough information about specific CJTF-HOA humanitarian assistance missions to be able to assess whether this critique rings true in the Horn of Africa. But it is important to note that, while CJTF-HOA assesses its missions are having a positive impact on the host nation and local populations, it could in fact be having the opposite effect.

Another critique, which has been aimed directly at CJTF-HOA, is that the task force has not put any measures in place to assess the effectiveness of its humanitarian missions or to

sustain completed projects. CJTF-HOA currently does not have a mechanism to track where

minimal expenditure projects (those which do not require approval from U.S. Embassies) have

been completed and whether the projects have had any sustainable impact on the local

populace.[81] According to Dr. Jessica Piombo of the Naval Post Graduate School, the above two

critiques are valid in the case of CJTF-HOA. As she states:

> Aligning with the general critique, the CJTF-HOA does not build in
> monitoring and evaluation into their programs. When asked about the impact,
> they cannot tell you if the projects they have carried out for the past five years
> have had any sustainable impact either in the realm of counter-terrorism or in
> developmental terms. The CJTF-HOA also has no tracking system for minimal
> expenditure projects, and therefore has no list of where all these projects are or
> how much has been spent on them. Without these figures, it is impossible to even
> begin to measure impact in any way.[82]

However, these are not necessarily problems with their "sunshine and love" model. Rather, they

appear to be execution issues that could likely be overcome with better training and closer

coordination with the U.S. State Department and NGOs when choosing and evaluating the

impact of specific projects. Therefore, these valid critiques of the CJTF-HOA model should not

prevent AFRICOM from using the same model throughout Africa, but AFRICOM should be

aware of training requirements and issues.

Another key aspect of the CJTF-HOA model is the effectiveness of its information

operations campaign. "We've understood for a long time that the challenges in Africa cannot be

solved by the military alone…economic development, responsive governance, health, crime, and

poverty are all pieces of the security environment," stated Rear Admiral Bob Moeller.[83] If

CJTF-HOA is about security and stability through responsive governance, then its humanitarian

assistance missions should focus on linking and highlighting their missions to host nation

cooperation, participation and leadership. Individuals must be able to rely on their state for basic

services such as security, water, sewage and power. If CJTF-HOA claims responsibility for the

basic services projects it builds or funds, they the task force is helping to drive the wedge between individuals and their state further apart.

When CJTF-HOA dedicates schools, wells and medical facilities and inoculates animals, they should strive to put a local government face on the project. However, in looking at media reports from such events, this is not the always the case. A search of Kenyan English-language newspapers, which included *The Daily Nation, East African Standard, The Standard, and The East African,* revealed 16 total reports related to CJTF-HOA missions. Of those 16 stories, 14 were negative with headlines like "Global Cop USA Seeks More Presence in Africa," "War on Terror: US Hypocrisy Astonishing," and "Secrets Behind US, UK Anti-Terror War in Kenya." Of the three positive reports covering CJTF-HOA missions, only one linked U.S. humanitarian assistance with the Kenyan government. This is a surprisingly low number, especially considering at least 16 CJTF-HOA missions were conducted in Kenya between 2004 and 2006.[84] With such minimal positive coverage, these missions are doing little to expand the legitimacy of the state governments beyond the immediate beneficiaries of the missions. It is unclear whether smaller, local media coverage ties CJTF-HOA assistance to host nation cooperation and leadership.

A similar search of the Kenyan, Ethiopian and Djiboutian[85] U.S. Embassy websites revealed differing results. A search for CJTF-HOA missions on the U.S. Embassy in Kenya website returned just three reports. While all of the reports praised the U.S. humanitarian assistance to Kenyan, none mentioned host nation partnership or assistance. The U.S. Embassy in Djibouti had just two stories relating to CJTF-HOA projects in the country. Both stories mentioned host government cooperation, but only briefly. The U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, on the other hand, did an excellent job of linking CJTF-HOA activities to the host nation. Of the 29

reports on the website, almost all clearly linked CJTF-HOA projects to host government

cooperation and leadership. For example, a report from August 2006 titled, "US Military Task

Force Supports Flood Victims in Ethiopia," links the support to the host government by stating:

> Responding to an appeal from the Ethiopian government and the U.S.
> Charge d'Affaires in Addis Abba to work with the Ethiopian National Defense
> Forces, the U.S. Agency for International Development and nongovernmental
> organizations to provide emergency assistance in the flood-devastated region, the
> U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion-5 from the Combined Joint Task
> Force-Horn of Africa mobilized a team of 35 service members.[86]

The reports from the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia set the right tone by spotlighting host nation

cooperation and leadership. Another report on the refurbishment of a school stated "Ms.

Deborah Malac, Charge' d'Affaire of the United States Embassy in Ethiopia, praised the

partnership between the Ethiopian and American governments that led to the refurbishment of

the Abadir Primary School in Addis Ababa."[87] The U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia also consistently

reported on the mission of CJTF-HOA, helping to dispel fears of U.S. military involvement in

Africa. One example of this is a report on CJTF-HOA's support to inoculation efforts in

Ethiopia:

> The mission of the task force is to conduct unified action with local military
> forces and government representatives in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes
> region to prevent conflict, promote regional stability, and protect Coalition
> interests in order to prevail against extremism.[88]

Overall, the information operations campaign essential to promoting good governance in

East Africa is not effective or well coordinated among U.S. government agencies. While the

U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia is doing an admirable job, other embassies where CJTF-HOA has

conducted the majority of its operations are not performing so well. Additionally, the national

media in Kenya is highly suspect of U.S. operations within the country. The majority of its

reports are negative and only one has highlighted host-nation cooperation and leadership. CJTF-

HOA is losing the information operations campaign in the limited environments this research

assessed. And, unfortunately, the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia's excellent information operations

campaign may do more harm than good. This relentless linking of CJTF-HOA operations to the

host nation could be detrimental because of the current authoritarian regime in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has been a staunch ally of the U.S. government and was cited by the Bush

Administration as a key counterterrorism ally in 2001.[89] USAID described Ethiopia as "the

linchpin to stability in the Horn of Africa and the Global War on Terrorism."[90] But the nation's

leader, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, is viewed by many as an authoritarian and undemocratic

ruler. The Zenawi regime has used harsh tactics to suppress the independent media and free

speech and many opposition leaders have disappeared while their supporters have been tortured

in prison.[91] According to Harvard researchers, Ethiopia ranks 31 out of 48 African states

analyzed for good governance. Its score was essentially the same as it received in 2002, 2004,

and 2006 using the same methodology. Ethiopia performed disappointingly across the board,

ranking 31st in the "Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption" category and 36th in the

"Participation and Human Rights" category.[92] By heavily supporting Ethiopia, many scholars

claim the U.S. is using the same approach toward Africa as it did during the Cold War. In

combating the USSR, the U.S. basically supported any regime that was not communist.[93]

As of 2006, at least 22 of 125 projects conducted by CJTF-HOA were in Ethiopia. This

fact, combined with the U.S. Embassy's excellent information operations campaign, inextricably

links CJTF-HOA missions with the Ethiopian regime. This is, and should be, CJTF-HOA's goal

in its role of achieving security and stability through good governance; to link its humanitarian

assistance missions and accomplishments to the host nation. However, the association of the

U.S. and CJTF-HOA with an authoritarian government that is unpopular within its own capital

undermines a critical component of that strategy, good governance. This is an area where the

CJTF-HOA model falls short as a model for AFRICOM. Its missions of military-to-military

training and humanitarian assistance missions are designed to promote good governance and

expand the reach of and increase support for host nation governments. But what if the host

nation government is already bad? What if it is undemocratic, authoritarian, does not respect

human rights, or is thoroughly corrupt? The model has no branch plan for authoritarian regimes

or bad state actors. In the case of Ethiopia, there is no clear evidence linking CJTF-HOA

projects and missions with the emergence of democratic ideals or practices, as is the goal stated

in the 2006 National Security Strategy.

The 2006 National Security Strategy also listed failed states as significant threat to

regional stability and U.S. security. No nation in the world is more emblematic of a failed state

than Somalia. Somalia has basically been ungoverned since 1991.[94] The Council of Islamic

Courts came to power around 2004 and won over the population by providing security and

services; however, this new government was associated with regional terrorists, like al Ittihad al

Islamiyah, and suspected of having ties to al Qaida.[95] As the Islamic Courts were establishing

power, CJTF-HOA was operating in the Horn of Africa, but was not allowed into Somalia.

General Ghormley, the CJTF-HOA Commander in 2006, described the task force's efforts in

Somalia by stating, "I have to affect what's going on in there…because I am not allowed into

Somalia, the best I can do is to surround it with U.S. forces."[96] But without troops on the ground

in Somalia, shaping the environment was essentially impossible. With the Islamic Courts

establishing power, Ethiopia responded by invading Somalia in 2007 to oust them from the

government and instill the internationally-recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

Since 2003, forces assigned to CJTF-HOA trained Ethiopian forces as part of its security cooperation and military-to-military training missions.[97] In December 2006 Ethiopia sent its troops across the Somali border to battle the Islamic Courts government and place the TFG into power. But, while the TFG has taken charge, the invasion did not restore stability. The former Islamic government leader sought refuge in Eritrea, and formed the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). Additionally, former Islamic Courts loyalists have formed insurgent groups and now control much of southern Somalia. The insurgent groups, ARS, and the hard-line al Shabaab terror group have vowed to continue fighting until the Islamic government is reinstated.[98] Demonstrating the TFG's fragile hold on power, the government was forced to grant the rule of Sharia Law to one of Somalia's Provinces in early 2009. As a result of the Ethiopian invasion, the Islamic insurgency is likely to continue while a second insurgency, led by warlords of disaffected clans, is likely to emerge.[99] Although some short-term counterterrorism goals were achieved in Somalia, including the death of suspected al Qaida associates, the emerging insurgencies will be a significant destabilizing factor in the Horn of Africa region for the foreseeable future.

Although CJTF-HOA has surrounded Somalia with humanitarian assistance and military training missions and although the task force helped train Ethiopian forces, there is no evidence these mission have helped stabilize the horn of Africa in relation to Somalia. In fact, quite the opposite has occurred. The military-to-military training missions are intended to help Africa solve Africa's problems, but it also shifts the kinetic burden to African forces, and, as in the case of Ethiopia and Somalia, the results can be unpredictably and less than optimum. What's worse, CJTF-HOA and the U.S. are inextricable linked to the Ethiopian invasion.[100] Few in Mogadishu believe there are terrorists in Somalia and most think the U.S. War on Terrorism is a war against

Islam. Perceived U.S. cooperation with unpopular warlords on counterterrorism efforts fueled public resentment.[101] "So long as the U.S. effort in Somalia remains essentially to capture and kill bad guys, and there are some in Somalia, the U.S. marginalizes its ability to impact in a positive way any long-term solution to the Somali problems."[102]

Another destabilizing factor that has emerged from Somalia's failed state has been the increase of piracy off the Horn of Africa. While CJTF-HOA's mission does not include maritime security, the pirates operate small vessels from the shores of Somalia. They are land-based operations from heavily armed bases primarily in Central and Northern Somalia. Once pirates seize a ship, they are often brought to the territorial waters of Somalia in order for the pirates to be closer to their bases and, thus, food, water, ammunition and other resources.[103] This has been an effective operation as piracy off the coast of East Africa quadrupled from 2003 to 2008. Some of the money raised by the Somali pirates' ransom business goes toward fighting the war in Somalia and is suspected of funding the Al Shabaab group, contributing significantly to instability in the Horn.[104] Piracy in this region is also an international concern because of its impact on international trade and potential for an environmental disaster.[105]

Pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia have increased significantly since 2004, while CJTF-HOA was conducting operations in the Horn. With just five attacks in 2004, pirates conducted more than 60 attacks in 2008.[106] Pirates are also growing bolder in their attacks, with some extending 450 miles from the Somali coast.[107] The battle against the increasingly bold pirates is split between two U.S. task forces. Task Force 151 is the maritime component and CJTF-HOA is responsible for Somalia.[108] But CJTF-HOA, as was the case when General Ghormley was in charge, is still not operating in Somalia. As the current CJTF-HOA Commander, Rear Admiral Anthony Kurta stated, "AFRICOM isn't working much in Somalia

itself…[T]he soft approach it favors requires a stable government and that's something Somalia doesn't have."[109] This is one of the fundamental flaws with the CJTF-HOA model and a cause of concern with anti-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa. The model is unable to tackle the problem of failed or failing states. The CJTF-HOA model requires a degree of a stable environment before it can be implemented, preventing it, in this case, from tackling the problem of a failed Somali state and the piracy problem it has created. Although Somalia is probably the worst case, there are other unstable governments such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Sudan and Angola, and AFRICOM would not be able to address the problems in these countries with "sunshine and love."[110]

In summary, the CJTF-HOA model is capable of achieving some of AFRICOM's goals, but its inability to address the issues of failed states and authoritarian regimes make it unsuitable as an overarching model for AFRICOM to use throughout the continent. Two of the most common criticisms of military humanitarian intervention and CJTF-HOA specifically are that the humanitarian projects are often misguided and they lack sustainment mechanisms. While this may be true in the case of CJTF-HOA, this is an execution problem and not an issue with the effectiveness of the "sunshine and love" strategy. The same can be said of the U.S. information operations campaign in the Horn of Africa. Although the campaign has been relatively ineffective in Kenya and Djibouti, this too is assessed as an execution problem and not a problem with the CJTF-HOA model as a whole.

When looking at the problems of Ethiopian and Somali governance as well as piracy, problems with the CJTF-HOA model come to light. The model is unable to address the issues of failed or failing states and bad or authoritarian governments. The U.S.'s relentless support for the Ethiopian government and focus on the War on Terrorism "has stifled U.S. efforts to press

for more democracy and greater respect for human rights in Ethiopia."[111] It has also undermined

attempts at solving the disputed border region between Ethiopia and Eritrea, further destabilizing

the region.[112] In many ways Ethiopia is Africa's Pakistan, a necessary ally in the War on Terror,

but one that does not live up to U.S. democratic ideals. Additionally, CJTF-HOA's military-to-

military training mission is aimed at enabling African nations to take care of African problems.

But this also shifts the kinetic burden to forces that are extremely limited in means and

capability, and, in the case of Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia, might not live up to their billing.

And the CJTF-HOA model, with its soft-power approach, is not even able to conduct operations

in Somalia, making it wholly unsuited to the problem of this failed state. Overall, CJTF-HOA's

soft-power, "sunshine and love" approach fails as a model for AFRICOM to utilize throughout

Africa because it requires that which it seeks to achieve; a degree of security and stability. When

AFRICOM attempts to tackle the tough problems of civil war in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, the MEND insurgency in Nigeria, Zimbabwe's authoritarian regime, or the crisis in

Darfur, it will have to look to other strategies and forego the "sunshine and love."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research paper has sought to prove that the U.S. has growing strategic interests in

Africa, that AFRICOM is a means to address this growing strategic interest, and that, although

many see CJTF-HOA as a model for AFRICOM to emulate throughout the continent, the model

is insufficient to tackle the problems of failed of failing states and authoritarian regimes. Against

tough circumstances such as an unpopular war in Iraq, what many viewed as a proxy war in

Somalia and numerous skeptics questioning the reasoning behind AFRICOM, America's newest

combatant command has done an admirable job of selling itself as a "new type of command."[113]

Its website and public announcements appear to send all the right messages of cooperation,

interagency approach and Africa leadership. However, as it seeks to secure and stabilize Africa's vast expanses, the CJTF-HOA model has the potential to solve many problems but is not a strategy that can work across the continent. Although AFRICOM should be able to improve upon CJTF-HOA's coordinated information operations campaign through its interagency organization and sustainability issues through better training, CJTF-HOA's inability to address the problems of failed and authoritarian states are significant flaws. Failed states pose the most significant threat to African stability and many authoritarian regimes in Africa pose threats to regional stability. AFRICOM must be able to address these problems to achieve its goal of stability through capacity building, but the CJTF-HOA model does not provide the means.

After reviewing and assessing AFRICOM's mission and the CJTF-HOA model, the following recommendations can be made. First and foremost, AFRICOM should take the counter-terrorism face, and, therefore, stigma, off of its mission. As the Bush administration began contemplating establishing a geographic combatant command, its national security policy was based primarily on counter-terrorism.[114] Since then, counter-terrorism has driven most U.S. policies in Africa and this strategy has stymied efforts to promote good governance and resolve conflicts.[115] CJTF-HOA's mission of "prevail against extremism," and the AFRICOM Commander's major focus area of "defeating[ing] Al Qaida and its associated movements," continues to validate the criticism of the U.S.'s terrorism first strategy. With counterterrorism as the driving force, the U.S. risks demeaning the very same people it is there to assist and win over. "…Connecting foreign aid with terrorism risks the possibility of humiliating many people in less developed countries, who are implicitly told that they receive aid only to prevent them from committing acts of terror."[116]

Instead, AFRICOM and CJTF-HOA should remove references to counterterrorism from its mission set and list those elements which it thinks are underlying factors leading to terrorism. For example, instead of stating "prevail against extremism," CJTF-HOA could put as its mission, prevail against poverty or promote good governance. Today, if an African looks at the CJTF-HOA website to learn more about the command, the first sentence they will see under mission is "CJTF-HOA employs an 'indirect approach' to counter extremism…through a strategy of cooperative conflict prevention we build security capacity, promote regional cooperation, and protect coalition interests to prevail against extremism."[117] "Prevail against extremism" is sending the wrong message to CJTF-HOA's target audience. Changing the mission statement would achieve the same end result and would avoid offending East Africans.

Additionally, in order to properly employ a CJTF-HOA-style strategy in situations where it can be effective, AFRICOM should seek training from NGOs for military personnel on its front lines and conduct field training exercises with NGOs and U.S. government agencies. The presence of some NGOs at AFRICOM's headquarters should help coordination efforts and alleviate misunderstandings and misperceptions between the military and traditional humanitarian assistance organizations. However, NGO training for military personnel would likely improve the military's humanitarian assistance capabilities and address common critiques of military intervention, that of misguided projects and sustainability. Additionally, conducting field exercises with NGOs and U.S. government agencies would greatly assist communication and coordination issues.

CJTF-HOA's "sunshine and love" strategy, which focuses on non-kinetic humanitarian assistance missions, military-to-military training, and capacity building, is a unique strategy that can be very effective in areas of Africa that already have some degree of stability

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and security. With a written change in focus from counter-terrorism as well as an improved

humanitarian assistance training and increased cooperation with NGOs and U.S. agencies, the

CJTF-HOA model is an excellent strategy for AFRICOM to use in some parts of Africa.

However, AFRICOM cannot rely on "sunshine and love" to tackle to extremely tough problems

of failed or failing states and bad or authoritarian governments. The importance of Africa to

U.S. national security and economic interests has increased significantly over the past two

decades, and continues to increase. In order to achieve U.S. national security objectives and

promote U.S. interests in Africa, AFRICOM must not only be a different type of command but

also a flexible type of command, able to employ strategies as diverse as the African continent.

Africa's problems are vast, complex and variable. While "sunshine and love" can be effective, it

should be but one strategy in the very large tool box of strategies AFRICOM needs to achieve its

objectives on the African continent.

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